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ABSTRACT

Compiled for use by Missouri vocational educators in the classroom or workplace, this instructional unit is the second of four designed to aid students and adults in assessing their own attitudes and plans and obtaining an awareness of sex equity and bias. Its objective is for the participant to be able to recognize sexist language and to use unbiased language in speaking and writing. Materials provided include a unit and specific objectives, suggested activities for instructors and participants, list of instructional materials, unit references, information sheet(s), transparency masters, handout(s), and activity sheets. (YLB)

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EQUALITY IN LANGUAGE

An Instructional Unit in Sex Equity

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FOREWORD

This instructional unit has been compiled for use by Missouri vocational educators in the classroom or in workshops. The activities included were collected from a variety of sources and are referenced accordingly. It is hoped the unit will provide a means by which students and adults can be guided to assess their own attitudes and plans, as well as to attain an awareness of sex equity and bias.

James D. Good
Project Coordinator

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EQUALITY IN LANGUAGE
UNIT II

UNIT OBJECTIVE

After completing this unit, the participant should be able to recognize sexist language and to use unbiased language in speaking and writing.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, the participant should be able to:

1. Match terms associated with language and its use to the correct definitions.
2. Recognize characteristics of the English language which account for different treatment of the sexes.
3. Distinguish between discriminatory and non-discriminatory titles of address indicating gender.
4. Recognize the use of gender-free nouns and pronouns.
5. Use sex-free occupational titles.
6. Make reference to physical appearance of a person only when there is a specific purpose in doing so.

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EQUALITY IN LANGUAGE
UNIT II

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

I. Instructors

A. Provide participants with unit objectives.

B. Provide participants with information outlines and activity sheets as needed.

C. Make transparencies.

D. Discuss unit and specific objectives.

E. Discuss activities to be completed by participants.

F. Provide materials needed for the completion of unit activities.

II. Participants

A. Read objectives.

B. Read information outlines and activity sheets.

C. Discuss with instructor and other participants the objectives for each unit.

D. Discuss with instructor and other participants the activities to be completed.

E. Consult resources provided by the instructor for completion of unit activities. Research additional information as needed.

F. Complete each activity.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

I. Unit Contents

A. Objectives

B. Information sheets

C. Transparency masters

1. TM-II-1: CONFUSION IN LANGUAGE

2. TM-II-2: STEREOTYPING IN TERMINOLOGY

3. TM-II-3: ANALYZING SEX AND GENDER

D. Handouts

1. H-II-1: ALTERNATIVES TO SEXIST LANGUAGE

E. Activity sheets

1. AS-II-1: CONFUSION IN LANGUAGE

2. AS-II-2: WHAT'S IN A WORD?

3. AS-II-3: ANALYZING SEX AND GENDER

II. Unit References

A. Good, James D., ed. Untapped Resources in Vocational Education: Teacher Materials. Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, Instructional Materials Lab., 1979.

B. Project Awareness: A Multi-State Leadership Project Addressing Sex Discrimination Issues in Education. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976.

C. Promoting Sex Equity in the Classroom: Sex Equity Guidelines. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University, 1980.

D. Responses to Sexism: Classroom Practices in Teaching English, 1976-1977. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976.

E. Smith, Amanda J. and Farris, Charlotte J. Pioneering Programs in Sex Equity: A Teacher's Guide. Arlington, Virginia: American Vocational Association, 1980.

F. Steelman, Susan, Stapleton, Dan and Schlichting, Harley. Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes in IML Publications. Columbia, Missouri: Instructional Materials Laboratory, UMC, 1978.

EQUALITY IN LANGUAGE
UNIT II

INFORMATION SHEET

I. Terms and Definitions

A. Language - words, their pronunciation, and the methods of combining them used and understood by a considerable community and established by long usage.

B. Exclusionary language - words which exclude one sex or the other.

Examples: exclusionary language

When man invented the wheel . . .
The lady lawyer delivered . . .

neutral language

When the wheel was invented . . .
The lawyer delivered . . .

C. Negative language - words which have a negative effect on one sex or the other (also referred to as "sexist" language).

Examples: negative "female" language

The girls in the office . . .
Pioneers moved West, taking their wives and children with them.

neutral language

The women in the office . . .
Pioneer families moved West.

negative "male" language

His old man told him . . .
Jim helps his wife do the housework.

neutral language

His father told him . . .
Jim shares the housework.

D. Neutral language - unbiased or "non-sexist" language.

II. Characteristics of the English language which account for different treatment of the sexes.

A. Exclusionary patterns

1. Use of the word "man" to denote people of both sexes.

2. Use of the word "man" in occupations and titles.
examples: congressman, businessman

3. Lack of a neutral singular pronoun meaning "one" or "ones."
(NOTE: The lack of a neutral singular pronoun has given rise to the use of "he," "him," and "his" to refer to individuals whose sex is not mentioned.)

4. Use of female words and female qualifiers which exclude males.
examples: poetess, usherette, aviatrix, chairwoman, woman lawyer

B. Negative (sexist) language

1. Describing females

a. Patronizing, girl-watching tones

b. Sexual innuendos, jokes, or puns focusing on physical appearances

c. Treating women as weak, helpless, hysterical, or objects of scorn, humor, and unimportance

d. Dependent on males as wives, daughters, mothers, or sisters

e. Failing to recognize a woman's individuality

f. Placing women in menial positions

g. Inept in scientific reasoning, physical exertion, sports and so-called male professions

2. Describing males

a. Inept in the home or with children

b. Dependent on females for meals, clothes and understanding

c. Calloused or insensitive to the feelings of others

d. Preoccupied with sexual escapades or empire building

e. Objects of scorn, humor, and hostility

f. Family's sole breadwinner

g. Expected to succeed

III. Use of titles of address indicating gender
(NOTE: Two alternatives are acceptable.)

A. Similar titles of address indicating gender can be used for males and females.
example: Sue Jones and Bill Smith are interviewing for the job.
or: Ms. Jones and Mr. Smith are . . .

B. Titles of address indicating gender can be omitted.
example: Jones and Smith are interviewing for the job.
not: Ms. Jones and Smith are . . .

C. In the spoken language, titles of address indicating gender are used only when preferences are stated.

IV. Use of gender-free nouns and pronouns

A. Gender-free plural pronouns or, if possible, an equal balance of gender-specific singular pronouns are used.
example: They are studying safety procedures. She is checking the equipment while he reads from the operating manual.

B. Gender-free nouns are substituted for gender pronouns.
example: The groundskeeper will aerate the golf course greens.
not: He will aerate the golf course greens.

C. Gender-free nouns are used to denote all human beings.
example: People benefited from the discovery of a new wheat strain.
not: Mankind benefited from the discovery of a new wheat strain.

D. Indefinite pronouns (anyone, anybody, everyone, everybody) may have a plural pronoun referent in all but the most formal usage.
example: Anyone going to the welding shop during school hours must file their permission slip in the office.
not: Anyone going to the welding shop during school hours must file his permission slip in the office.

V. Use of Sex-Free Occupational Titles

A. Sex-free occupational titles are used as indicated in the latest Dictionary of Occupational Titles.

example:	1977 edition	1965 edition
	flight attendant	flight stewardess
	repairer	repairman

B. An occupation is described as being performed by both sexes.

examples: Either Harold O'Brien or Beth Alden, community health aides, is qualified to present a series of nutrition lessons.

Sharon Johnson and Homer Horton, supervisors for the tool and die department, checked the die for a horizontal screw extruder.

VI. References to Physical Appearance

A. Reference is made to physical appearance only when there is a purpose.

avoid: Blond, blue-eyed Hazel Spillers won the livestock judging award.

B. Nondemeaning descriptions of people are used.

avoid: The girls were chattering about . . .

Sources: Mussett, Sarah H. Eliminating Sex Bias and Sex-Role Stereotyping from Instructional Materials (rough draft). Stillwater, Oklahoma: Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center, Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, 1978.

Promoting Sex Equity in the Classroom: Sex Equity Guidelines. Ames Iowa: Iowa State University, 1980.

To be used with Activity Sheet 1

1. The man of tomorrow will benefit from a truly pluralistic society.

2. Man is a thinking species and, consequently, can plan to adapt.

3. A man can no longer expect his father to give him land for farming.

4. A man's home is his castle.

5. All men are created equal.

6. The black man in America has a history seldom recognized or taught.

7. As man moved westward, he left behind loved ones; wives, children, and parents.

8. To survive, man needs food, water, shelter, and female companionship.

9. The average American does not himself manufacture most of the things his wife and children need.

10. For the festivities, the Indians dressed in boldly feathered costumes and accented their faces with designs from colorful dyes. Women, too, painted their faces.

11. Workers began to form unions.

12. Workers and their wives suffered innumerable hardships.

13. Workers and their wives or husbands organized around higher wages.

14. It has been falsely said that the Greeks mistreated their wives.

15. It has been falsely said that the Greeks were mistreated by their husbands.

16. It has been falsely said that Greek husbands mistreated Greek wives.

    OR

    It has been falsely said that in Greek society, husbands mistreated wives.

17. Every elementary teacher should confer weekly with her principal.

18. A good nurse has one outstanding quality: she must be skilled in human relations.

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* Why are forceful males referred to as charismatic while females are domineering?

* When speaking about people who are talkative, why are men called articulate and women gabby?

* Why are men who are forgetful called absentminded when forgetful women are called scatterbrained?

* Why are men who are interested in everything referred to as curious but women of the same type are called nosy?

* Why is it that obstinate men are called strong-willed when obstinate women are called stubborn?

* Why are angry men called outraged while angry women are called hysterical?

* Why are women who are ironic called bitter while ironic men are called humorous?

* Why are men who are efficient referred to as competent but efficient women are compulsive?

* Because of Sexism in Language

* Why is it that when men talk together it is called conversation but when women talk together it is called gossip?

* Why are devious men considered shrewd when devious women are scheming?

* Why are lighthearted men called easygoing but the same type of women are called frivolous?

* Why are women who are thoughtful called considerate while thoughtful men are called over-sensitive?

* Why are careful men called prudent but the same kind of woman is called obsessive?

* Why are women who are dauntless considered brazen when dauntless men are considered fearless?

* Why is it that men of ordinary appearance are called pleasant-looking when ordinary women are called homely?

* In speaking about a person who is industrious why are men called hard workers when women are called drudges?

*Because of Sexism in Language

Source: Adapted from Project Awareness.

To be used with Activity Sheet 3

SET 1:
a. She hurt himself.
b. Give this coffee to my mother. He likes it with milk and sugar.
c. My brother Andrew prefers hers with sugar only.

SET 2:
a. He is vivacious.
b. Uncle Howard had a baby.
c. Her aggressive tactics were much admired.

SET 3:
a. The surgeon put on her mask.
b. The babysitter raised his voice.
c. The manager held herself accountable for every mistake made in the department.

SET 4:
a. The surgeon put on his mask.
b. The babysitter raised her voice.
c. The manager held himself accountable for every mistake made in the department.

SET 5:
a. The surgeon is vivacious.
b. That actor is beautiful.
c. The manager had a baby.

Source: Kolba, Ellen D. "Analyzing Sex and Gender"

EQUALITY IN LANGUAGE
UNIT II

HANDOUT #1: ALTERNATIVES TO SEXIST LANGUAGE

EXCLUSIONARY LANGUAGE	ALTERNATIVES
mankind	humanity, human beings, people
man's achievements	human achievements
the best man for the job	the best person for the job, the best man or woman for the job
man-made	synthetic, manufactured, machine-made
the common man	the average person, ordinary people
salesman	sales representative, sales clerk
businessman	business executive, business manager, business leader, merchant, entrepreneur
airline stewardess	flight attendant
housewife	homemaker
The typical homemaker is concerned about her family's eating habits.	Family eating habits are a concern of the typical homemaker.
Give each student his paper as soon as he is finished.	Give students their papers as soon as they are finished.
a homeowner and his family	homeowners and their families
a farmer and his wife	a farm couple
men and ladies	women and men or gentlemen and ladies

Source: Steelman, Susan, Stapleton, Dan and Schlichting, Harley. Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes in IML Publications. Columbia, Missouri: Instructional Materials Laboratory, UMC, 1978.

EQUALITY IN LANGUAGE
UNIT II

ACTIVITY SHEET #1: CONFUSION IN LANGUAGE

The following sentences examine the use of the word "man" in the generic sense, meaning all people, versus its use as male specific. Confusion often results. These instructions are designed to be used with TM-II-1.

1. Ask participants how many believe we spend too much time worrying about the use of the word "man" in the generic sense, meaning all people, as opposed to a more non-sexist alternative. Most will agree that the issue receives too much emphasis.

2. Using TM-II-1, uncover the sentences one at a time, examining each in turn.

3. Ask participants about the meaning of the word "man" in sentences #1 and #2 shown below.

   #1 - The man of tomorrow will benefit from a truly pluralistic society.
   #2 - Man is a thinking specie and, consequently, can plan to adapt.

   They will probably agree that it is being used in the generic sense--to include both men and women.

4. Ask participants about the meaning of the word "man" in sentences #3 and #4.

   #3 - A man can no longer expect his father to give him land for farming.
   #4 - A man's home is his castle.

   Participants will probably agree that the intention here is male-specific.

5. Ask about the meaning of "men" in sentence #5.

   #5 - All men are created equal.

   Participants will probably agree it is intended in the generic sense--to include both men and women. However, when the Declaration of Independence was signed, it was intended spefically as "white, property-holding males." So the meanings change, depending on the purposes of the user.

6. Ask participants about sentence #6.

   #6 - The Black man in America has a history seldom recognized or taught.

   Most will probably say its intent is generic in nature, but the meaning may change with the situation or the listener.

7. Prior to showing sentences #7 and #8, place a paper flap over the parts indicated. These should be taped on the top or end to allow the flap to be folded back to reveal the remainder of the statement.

   #7 - As man moved Westward, he left behind loved ones:
   [wives, children, and parents.]

   #8 - To survive, man needs food, water, shelter,
   [and female companionship.]

   The initial part of each sentence will probably be interpreted by most participants as a generic usage of the word "man." They will likely be surprised when the remainder of each statement is uncovered. These are examples of delayed qualification. The confusion becomes more apparent.

8. Show sentences #9 and #10.

   #9 - The average American does not himself manufacture most of the things that his wife and children need.

   #10 - For the festivities, the Indians dressed in boldly feathered costumes, and accented their faces with designs from colorful dyes.
   [Women, too, painted their faces.]

   This delayed qualification of a supposedly generic term also occurs in nationalities and ethnic groups. Women, in these cases, are not included as "average American" or "Indians."

9. Show sentences #11, #12, and #13.

   #11 - Workers began to form unions.
   #12 - Workers and their wives suffered innumerable hardships.
   #13 - Workers and their wives or husbands organized around higher wages.

   If we see reference to sentences like #11 and #12 in a text but seldom or never see one similar to #13, what does that tell us about the interpretation of the word, "workers," in the original sentence?

10. Show sentences #14, #15, and the two sentences under #16.

    #14 - It has been falsely said that the Greeks mistreated their wives.
    #15 - It has been falsely said that the Greeks were mistreated by their husbands.

    What kind of bias is present in each of these sentences? Some alternatives are offered in #16.

    #16 - It has been falsely said that Greek husbands mistreated Greek wives.

    OR

    It has been falsely said that in Greek society, husbands mistreated wives.

11. Show sentences #17 and #18.

    #17 - Every elementary teacher should confer weekly with her principal.
    #18 - A good nurse has one outstanding quality; she must be skilled in human relations.

    Why, if we are taught "rules" which indicate that when the sex is unknown, uncertain, or includes both we should use the male referent (man/he/him/his), do we consistently refer to elementary teachers, nurses, and secretaries as "her" or "she?" The assumption, of course, is that they are all female.

12. Conclude with a discussion about the mental images formed by children and young people upon hearing references similar to those given in the above examples. Do adults tend to form the same kinds of mental images?

Source: Adapted from Project Awareness: A Multi-State Leadership Project Addressing Sex Discrimination Issues in Education. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976.

4. Can you use any of these words in a sentence to assure that the reader/listener will know that you are talking about a female? Write two sentences using two words on the previous page.

Examine your two sentences. Dis you somehow have to "mark" the presence of a female, as in adding -ess to "murderer," female to "traveler," or by using the pronoun her? If so, you have used a form of "corrective" language to include those who are "left out" of the language norm. For example, a newspaper may refer to Shirley Chisholm as a "Black female Congressman," but would never call John Tunney a "white male Senator." He is simply a Senator from California. The assumption in our minds is that people are white and male, unless otherwise identified or "marked."

5. Why do you think so-called "neutral" words inspire male images?

6. How does this analysis apply to words such as "youth," "juvenile," and "student," for which there has been slightly more female population than male?

7. How does the generic usage of man and male pronouns (he, his, him) contribute to the assignment of male images to seemingly "neutral" words?

EQUALITY IN LANGUAGE
UNIT II

ACTIVITY SHEET #2: WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Language, the words and phrases we use in everyday living, spans all areas and levels of schooling. Whether you write instructional materials, are responsible for purchasing them, teach from them, or learn from them, you use language as a common and necessary part of your learning experiences and work. All of us learn attitudes from the language used by people surrounding us. For example, if a person talks of "broads" or "the old man," you can assume that the person has certain sexist assumptions. Language, then, in a sense, mirrors the interior thoughts of a person, reflecting a particular view of the world.

Remember, we did not "invent" the language we use. Both men and women use sexist terminology. Nevertheless, this should not excuse us from consciously examining our language for biased content and concerning ourselves with the effects of its usage on the attitudes and behaviors of people.

Now, imagine that you are a scientist, a linguist, and you must examine your language as objectively as possible. Close your eyes, relax, and pay attention to the images that are evoked in your mind as the instructor reads the following words.

> youth, sergeant, lover, thief, traveler, principal, juvenile, murderer, officer, writer, comrade, student, president, worker, scoundrel, boss, citizen, slave, manufacturer

Answer the following questions:

1. What images came to mind? _____

   _____

   _____

2. Were most of your images male or female? _____

3. Why do you think these certain images came to mind? _____

   _____

   _____

8. When a two-year-old child begins to speak, does the child understand that the generic applies to both females and males? What images does the child have?

_____

_____

_____

On the one hand, our experience suggests male association with the words on the list. On the other hand, since we grow up hearing and using the male generic in connection with these words, the very structure of the language confirms our male images.

However, regardless of why we have mostly male images, we have them. The point is that our language does not inspire mental images which generally include females. This is what is meant by the idea that language reflects our mental assumptions and biases.

As educators, parents, and students, we should be particularly concerned about harmful effects of this phenomenon on the self-concept and aspirations of girls, as well as the creation of a false sense of superiority in boys.

Source: Adapted from Project Awareness: A Multi-State Leadership Project Addressing Sex Discrimination Issues in Education. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976.

EQUALITY IN LANGUAGE
UNIT II

ACTIVITY SHEET #3: ANALYZING SEX AND GENDER

Examine each set of sentences below in turn to determine whether they are incorrect or sound incorrect. Discuss the reasons for the impressions they give the group in each case. (See TM-II-3.)

Set 1:
a. She hurt himself.
b. Give this coffee to my mother. He likes it with milk and sugar.
c. My brother Andrew prefers hers with sugar only.

(Grammatical lack of agreement between the nouns and the pronouns referring to them)

Set 2:
a. He is vivacious.
b. Uncle Howard had a baby.
c. Her aggressive tactics were much admired.

(Semantic violations of our assumptions about the meaning of words)

Set 3:
a. The surgeon put on her mask.
b. The babysitter raised his voice.
c. The manager held herself accountable for every mistake made in the department.

(No lack of agreement between the noun and the pronoun referent though our expectations may make us feel initially that there is)

Set 4:
a. The surgeon put on his mask.
b. The babysitter raised her voice.
c. The manager held himself accountable for every mistake made in the department.

(As we may expect to hear them; Sets 3 and 4 equally valid)

Set 5:
a. The surgeon is vivacious.
b. That actor is beautiful.
c. The manager had a baby.

(Compare with Set 2; Semantic relationships are the issue; Unlike Set 2, however, gender of subjects in Set 5 is ambigious, despite their connotations.)

Source: Kolba, Ellen D. "Analyzing Sex and Gender." Responses to Sexism: Classroom Practices in Teaching English, 1976-1977. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1976.